

MEMENTOS WITH HISTORY, 58

A Brigadista's souvenir?

A few days ago in a central Florida gun show, I found forgotten on an exhibitor's table and among many other pistols and revolvers, the veteran STAR Model A caliber 9 mm Largo (Bergmann) illustrated in the photograph below which, besides its very good mechanical condition (although devoid of any remaining bluing), bears the very interesting marking "CNT"; Any weapons with Spanish Republican markings or of Republican manufacture, are very infrequent findings even in this country, paradise of gun collectors; So, after a few seemingly unending moments of ill disguised anxiety due to another collector beating me to it by fractions of a second and examining it meticulously while I looked at the ceiling and whistled in apparent disinterest, he finally made the fatal mistake of laying it on the table and deciding to go for a short walk and "think it over for a while"; Never do that if the piece really interests you, as I snatched it with the speed of a rattler and after a very brief negotiation it became my possession; In more than forty years of gun collecting in this country and many hundreds of gun shows this is the first so-marked piece that I find; Let that be an index of its rarity.



Model A STAR pistol serial number 2903, date coded "C" (1,929), caliber 9 mm Bergmann (largo) marked CNT on the left side of the slide; The factory nicked magazine, not its original one, bears the Civil Guard logo and SN 31439.

This Model A STAR is the so-called "reformado" model due to the more ergonomic grip as in the US M1911A1 and is also known as the Modelo 1.931, although as indicated by its "C" date code this particular specimen was manufactured in 1,929; We may thus conclude that these changes date back to at least 1.929; Somehow it became the property of the CNT (Confederación Nacional de Trabajadores, the National Workers Confederation) and was marked with its initials; Very probably and judging by its well used exterior and somewhat corroded bore it may have seen some action in the Spanish Civil War, perhaps in the hands of a CNT anarchist; It is also possible that it may

fallen into the hands of an International “Brigadista”, maybe of the Abraham Lincoln brigade, and was brought home to the US as a war souvenir; The fact that it lacks any US importer’s markings and any Spanish export markings (SPAIN or MADE IN SPAIN) points in that direction.



This shoulder holster, of very good quality, acquired in Madrid several years ago and marked “TALLER COLECTIVO GUARNICIONERIA UGT-CNT VALENCIA” (Collective Leatherworkshop of the UGT-CNT in the city of Valencia) I had always assumed had been custom made for an RE, an Astra 400 copy also made in Valencia, but surprisingly this STAR fits in perfectly even though my RE and ASCASO pistols are a very tight fit indeed; I can picture it perfectly hanging from the shoulder and under an anarchist’s black leather jacket, as in the old 60s movie “Golpe de Mano”!!; If only it could talk!!

Hector J. Meruelo
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